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STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AF/EA, DCHA
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GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
NAIROBI FOR SFO
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SUBJECT: Sudan - Cattle Rustling, Emerging Government,
and USAID in Eastern Equatoria: USAID visits Budi and
Torit, May 3-8, 2006

Summary and Comment

¶1. From May 3 to 8, 2006, a USAID/DCHA program officer visited Eastern Equatoria State (EE) to assess humanitarian conditions in Southern Sudan. The greatest driver of conflict in EE is cattle rustling and retaliatory violence between tribes. Though all EE counties are absorbing returning internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, officials did not seem to be concerned about mounting population pressure on local infrastructure or resources. The USAID program officer witnessed a nascent government - non-existent just a few months ago - beginning to grapple with these challenges. USAID-funded partners are working side by side with these new officials and communities, and are making a critical impact in supporting the emerging government, mitigating conflict, and providing humanitarian assistance to returnees and the most vulnerable communities. USAID should maintain its support for peace-building and reconciliation activities. They are coveted by county and state officials, and they are reducing levels of conflict.

¶2. To sustain recent humanitarian achievements - many of them attributed to USAID support - EE will rely on international assistance for years to come. However, local dependence on USAID and other international donors should gradually decrease as EE continues down a seemingly positive and increasingly sustainable path.
End summary and comment.

Budi County

¶3. A County-Level Perspective: Budi County, one of eight counties in EE, is a microcosm of post-peace Eastern Equatoria. A representative of the Sudan Rehabilitation and Resettlement Commission (SRRC) estimated that approximately 2,000 refugees and IDPs have returned to Budi County alone since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005. Budi County has one of the lowest numbers of water

sources per person in Southern Sudan. One negative impact of the refugee influx may be an increase in HIV/AIDS. The hospital in Chukudum estimates that 10 percent of blood donors test positive for the disease, attributing most cases to recent returnees from Uganda and Kenya.

¶4. Conflict & Reconciliation: In Budi, cattle owners circulate with weapons and villagers live in fear of marauding, rival tribes seeking retribution for stolen livestock. Hours after USAID's arrival in Chukudum, the county seat, a woman was killed by a stray bullet in a vengeance attack on the outskirts of town. USAID implementing partner Pact has established a peace-building program to support peace-building activities in Budi and elsewhere in EE, helping Equatorian officials and leaders reconcile differences between rival tribes involved in cattle rustling. USAID met the county commissioner in southern Budi who was traveling to a neighboring county for a peace and reconciliation meeting between the Didenga of Budi and the rival Logir of Ikotos County. Villagers return home before dusk to avoid the threat of Logir attacks. Near the county line, a USAID-funded borehole worksite was guarded by local villagers with weapons.

¶5. Current Challenges: According to the SRRC representative, the biggest problems in Budi County are food security (the area experienced bad rains in 2003-2004), poor roads (the 35 kilometers from Chukudum to Lokutei takes 2.5 hours), and low vocational capacity. Over the last few months, the first EE state government officials have arrived in Chukudum, including the county commissioner (who has a vehicle), a SRRC representative, and officials from the Government of Southern Sudan

KHARTOUM 00001134 002 OF 003

(GoSS) Departments of Education, Health, Agriculture, and Veterinary Services. USAID implementing partner Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) informally mentors the health and water officials who came to Budi with no prior technical experience. Teachers and health workers still have not received salaries, causing much consternation, according to the SRRC representative.

Torit Town

¶6. Emerging Government: In Torit, the EE state capital and former Government of Sudan (GoS)-controlled garrison town, the deputy governor told USAID that the main security problem in the state was cattle rustling and subsequent retribution attacks by rival tribes. He listed the greatest needs as road improvements, increasing access to water, and improving food security in certain areas. He thanked USAID for its contributions and said the new county officials were beginning to tackle tribal disputes through peace conferences and mediation.

¶7. Recent Achievements: The UNMIS team leader for EE supported the governor's contention that rustling conflict was decreasing, in part because of the new network of government officials across the state addressing the issues of their constituents. He has seen a dramatic difference in the six months since he has been with the UNMIS unit of 47 members in EE. Aided by support from the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), EE recently distributed its first ever shipment of drugs to various health facilities across the state. In May, the state awarded \$270,000 to a water drilling company to drill 27 new boreholes throughout EE, another achievement. In another promising development, Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers have integrated in Torit and now share

the same barracks.

Humanitarian Situation

¶8. With its fledgling government, reduced levels of conflict, and a small but important network of NGO and UN humanitarian contributors, EE is a relative bright spot among the states of Southern Sudan. However, the state may not seem bright to the casual outside observer.

Humanitarian indicators - such as access to water and healthcare, food security, and government capacity to manage social services - are dangerously low. Due to poor water and sanitation conditions in Torit, the town has recorded 484 cases of cholera since late February. A representative of the non-government organization (NGO) Merlin estimated that there were only 17 latrines in all of Torit, a town of 28,000 people.

USAID Response

¶9. USAID contributions in EE touch upon many sectors critical to safeguarding public health and tackling the state's lack of social services. Since the signing of the CPA, USAID implementing ADRA has constructed or rehabilitated 40 water sources and 80 latrines in Budi. ADRA also supports all 12 county health centers and carries out a food-security and animal-health program. In Chukudum, USAID's impact includes new boreholes and latrines, animal health services, a new school under construction, and support to the county development committee.

¶10. To respond to the cholera outbreak in Torit, USAID is providing chlorine to treat the town's water supply and is repairing two water tanks. Other USAID-funded programs in Torit are providing 100 new beds for the hospital, cleaning supplies for 150 market vendors,

KHARTOUM 00001134 003 OF 003

supplies and equipment for the governor's office and five other EE state departments, and desks and chairs for 400 students in Torit's schools.

¶11. Specific Recommendations:

a) USAID should maintain its support for peace-building and reconciliation activities. They are coveted by county and state officials, and they are reducing levels of conflict;

b) Basic humanitarian support, particularly in the water and health sectors, must be maintained at current or slightly reduced levels for another year. However, USAID must aim to transition or carefully terminate financial support for certain aspects of its programs in these sectors as the government builds capacity and other non-USAID funding streams come online. Within the next 12 months, USAID may be able to cut its funding of drug and salary support to health facilities, and may be able to refocus its water program into the most vulnerable counties with an eye toward minimizing conflict over access to scarce water resources;

c) USAID's support to EE's government and urban centers through implementing partner Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) is having a significant physical and psychological impact, reinforcing expectations that peace provides dividends. USAID should continue ongoing DAI quick-impact projects, particularly in decrepit Kapoeta, the future capital of EE;

d) USAID-funded food distributions should be monitored

carefully in EE with a goal of transitioning to food support for work, education, and the most vulnerable; and

e) To maximize all international and governmental humanitarian efforts in EE, USAID should strongly encourage the United Nations to play a stronger coordination role in EE by anchoring itself in Torit and in Kapoeta.

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